Northwest Pollinators and Climate Change



What are pollinators?



Pollinators move pollen between male and female parts of flowering plants, allowing plants to produce seeds. Northwest pollinators are declining due to habitat loss, invasive species, pesticides, and climate change. In the Northwest, over 30 crops, including fruits and vegetables like apples, blueberries, cherries, alfalfa, tomatoes, and pumpkins, need insect or bird pollination.

How will climate change affect pollinators?

- Wildfires, heat waves, cold snaps, drought, and invasive species could lead to fewer blooms and increased pollination difficulty for temperature-sensitive pollinators.
- Pollinators may get out of sync with the plants they pollinate. In the Northwest, plant blooming is occurring around 8 days earlier than in 1951, challenging the typical emergence patterns of pollinators.
- Extreme heat could cause some pollinators to move to cooler climates at higher altitudes or latitudes.
- Increasing winter and spring rain could affect the quality and potency of nectar and pollen, decreasing pollinator and plant health.

How can we help Northwest pollinators?



Plant pollinator rows, strips, or gardens with native plants to enhance habitat and help your crops.



Alter rangeland grazing to occur after peak bloom to allow pollinators to visit flowers.



Restore riparian habitat to provide forage and shelter for pollinators.



Leave dead trees standing, where safe, to provide habitat for bees.